

A Life Changing Test

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When my husband Todd and I headed in to the hospital to have our first child, a girl, we naively thought we were prepared. When Jocelyn entered the world, we were so excited to meet her and the next 24 hours were a whirlwind. But that didn't even compare to what we would go through when Jocelyn was one day old and the nurse brought her back to our room following her newborn hearing screening. Failed was all I heard. I suddenly felt frantic. Prior to that moment, a newborn hearing screening was just a test, but now it was about my baby and there was nothing routine about it.

Two ABRs (auditory brainstem response) tests later, Jocelyn at 8 weeks old was diagnosed with moderate

to severe sensorineural bilateral hearing loss – she was deaf and it was permanent. How would I communicate with her? How could I learn sign language overnight? How could I make this ok and fix her? In the weeks and months and years to come our family would go through a grieving process from shock and

denial to acceptance and hope. As I look back, it was quite the journey – an

accelerated ride along the path of being a parent of a child with hearing loss. For my deaf daughter Jocelyn, the pace was

life altering.

Because Jocelyn had a newborn hearing screening her deafness didn't go undetected and we didn't lose any precious time.

After diagnosis, Jocelyn was referred to Early Steps and to our school district. At 4-months-old she got her hearing aids and at 10-months-old she began speech therapy. Today, Jocelyn has matured and developed much like her hearing and deaf peers. She speaks and

signs and is a great big sister to her little brother, Luc, who is hearing.



Looking back now I see just how critical those first few weeks and months were to setting Jocelyn on her path for living life as a deaf person. I don't even want to think about what our reality would be if we'd gone home from the hospital totally unaware that something wasn't right with our newborn's hearing. The truth certainly wasn't easy to accept at first, but it gave us a very important head start to putting our daughter on a course for success, hearing loss and all.

